

Voluntary - Public

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Germany

Post: Berlin

German Government Says Latest German HPAI Incident in Wild Duck Does Not Change Overall Risk

Report Categories:

Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

Poultry and Products

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Report Highlights:

A case of HPAI in a wild duck was detected through the standard wild bird monitoring system in Germany and was confirmed on March 6, 2009. The bird was shot during a hunt at Lake Starnberg in Southern Germany and did not show any signs of illness. German veterinary officials consider this incident a singular event as no additional incidents were reported.

General Information:

Background on current incident

As part of the ongoing routine wild bird avian influenza monitoring program samples were taken from 35 ducks and four Canada geese that were shot during a hunting event on January 10, 2009, close to Lake Starnberg in Bavaria, Southern Germany. One of the duck samples tested "mildly" positive for *influenza A* virus and was confirmed positive for *high pathogen H5N1 avian influenza* on March 6, 2009 by the German reference laboratory at the *Friedrich Loeffler Institut* (FLI).

After the confirmation, the local veterinary authorities (county veterinary office Starnberg) conducted a risk assessment. It concluded that the risk of spreading H5N1 into commercial poultry is low at the current time. It refrained from establishing a protection and surveillance zone. The reasons for their assessment were:

- It is commonly accepted that the virus is present in the wild bird population.
- The bird had been shot during flight and had not shown any signs of illness.
- In the eight weeks since the bird had been shot no further cases were detected.
- The poultry holdings in the area consist of small holdings and backyard hobby farms. Thus there is little danger of transporting a virus from one farm to another.

The Bavarian Office for Health and Food Safety, the Bavaria Ministry for the Environment, the German Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture, and Consumer Protection (BMELV) , and the European commission agree with this assessment.

Germany disagrees criticism regarding reporting period

Some press reports and the European Commission have criticized Germany for the long time (eight weeks) that elapsed between taking the samples and confirmation of the disease. German veterinary officials view this criticism as not justified. They stressed that this finding occurred as part of regular monitoring activities and that there had been no indication that the bird might be ill. A spokesperson from Starnberg County stressed that the wild bird monitoring system was put in place to gain information about the prevalence of the AI virus in the wild bird population and not as a protection measure. As a result, samples rank lower on the priority list than those for other diseases or from sick or deceased animals when it comes to which samples are tested first.

The samples arrived at FLI on March 3 and were confirmed positive on March 6. The incident was notified to the OIE on March 11, 2009. The notification can be accessed the following URL:

http://www.oie.int/wahis/reports/en_imm_0000007874_20090311

German AI Risk Assessment remains unchanged

The German reference laboratory *Friedrich-Loeffler-Institut* (FLI) last updated its risk assessment on February 23, 2009. The FLI left the risk levels unchanged from the previous assessment from October 2008. In detail, the current FLI risk assessment states the following risk levels [1] :

1) Introduction of HPAI into Germany through

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|--|------------|
| - illegal imports from non-EU countries: | high |
| - wild birds: | low |
| - animal/product movement within the EU: | moderate |
| - people and vehicle movement from abroad: | moderate |
| - legal imports from non-EU countries: | negligible |

2) Introduction and spread of HPAI that is already present in the country through

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|--|----------|
| - in country trade of water fowl | moderate |
| - wild birds: | low |
| - people and vehicle movement within Germany | low |

The full risk assessment can be accessed at the following URL

http://www.fli.bund.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Dokumente/News/aktuelle_Krankheitsgeschehen/avi_Flu/090223_Rb_Av_Influenza.pdf

^[1] The risks categories are defined as

Likely: circumstance can happen or could be reasonably expected
High: probability of this circumstance to occur is higher than average
Moderate: probability is on an average level
Low: probability is below average
Negligible: probability is so low that there is no need to look at this circumstance

Author Defined:

Report		Title	Date released
GM8054	Germany	AI in Turkey Flocks in Northern Germany - Low-Path H5N3	12/16/2008
GM8046	Germany	AI Update: Suspect Case in Saxony	10/09/2008
GM7060	Germany	AI update: Two more cases on small non-commercial poultry operations	12/31/2007
GM7059	Germany	AI update: New case on non-commercial poultry operation	12/19/2007
GM7055	Germany	AI update	12/12/2007
GM7040	Germany	AI: Outbreak in Commercial Duck Farm	08/27/2007
GM7030	Germany	AI update: Total Number Rises to 240 Wild Birds, One Goose on Backyard Farm	07/13/2007
GM7025	Germany	AI Re-Appears in Wild Birds	06/25/2007
GM6015	Germany	AI confirmed in a Commercial Poultry Farm - Consumer Reaction Limited	04/07/2006
GM6011	Germany	AI Update: AI confirmed in cats and suspected in a beech marten	03/10/2006
GM6008	Germany	AI update: 127 cases in wild birds none in domestic poultry	03/02/2006
GM6007	Germany	AI among wild birds reaches German mainland	02/21/2006
GM6005	Germany	AI Confirmed in Two Dead Swans in Northern Germany	02/16/2006
GM5042	Germany	Avian Influenza Update: Free Range Chicken Allowed Outside Again	12/19/2005
GM5035	Germany	AI-Threat: German Poultry Must Stay Inside - But Only in Certain Regions	09/12/2005